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PEANUTS--ON THE FARM, IN THE HOME, IN THE MARKET.

A radio conversation between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, Mr. E. J. Rowell, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Mr. W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Thursday, December 15, 1938, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Program, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 93 associate stations.

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WALLACE KADDERLY:

If we only had the Homesteaders here, we'd ask them to give us a little bit of mood music while Mr. Beattie, and Ruth Van Deman, and A. J. Rowell are taking their places around the microphones here. They're going to have a three-way conversation about peanuts--peanuts on the farm, in the home, and in the market. And this is one of the times we need a few strains of music to give just the proper build-up.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Something from the nut cracker suite, perhaps?

ED ROGERS:

Maybe I can whistle the Peanut Vender (whistles).

E. J. ROWELL:

(Chanting) "You shan't have any of my peanuts, when your peanuts are gone" - - -

KADDERLY:

Well, well, well!

VAN DEMAN:

All the home talent needs, you see, is a chance --

KADDERLY:

So it seems. I didn't realize the peanut has such a rich musical background -

W. R. BEATTIE:

The peanut has quite a history back of it, too, you know.

KADDERLY:

Yes, I've heard it came over in the slaves' ships from Africa.

BEATTIE:

But it was carried from Brazil to Africa first, by some of the very early explorers. At least so the story goes.

KADDERLY:

From South America, to Africa, and back to the Carolinas and Virginia That's quite a trip.

(over)

BEATTIE:

Yes, they're well travelled. But, peanuts got their commercial start in Tidewater, Virginia. The first peanut cleaning plant was established at Norfolk in 1876, and the second at Smithfield in 1880. As we look back now, it's quite a jump from those rather crude affairs to our modern sanitary mills with power machinery to clean and polish, grade and shell the nuts.

ROWELL:

And the up-to-date mills that grind two or three hundred million pounds into peanut butter every year.

VAN DEMAN:

I think I got my first taste of peanuts at the circus.

ROWELL:

I got mine at the ball game.

BEATTIE:

"Hot roasted peanuts, get 'em while they're hot." That call certainly had us all stopped.

VAN DEMAN:

And, more than the call, that good smell of peanuts roasting over a charcoal fire --

ROWELL:

Impossible to get by, wasn't it? And still is for me.

BEATTIE:

There's no doubt about it the circus and the ball game started this country eating peanuts in a big way.

ROWELL:

Then of course after the boll weevil got into the South and knocked out cotton as a cash crop in many sections, more farmers started planting peanuts.

BEATTIE:

That's true too. There's almost a peanut belt now, starting at the Atlantic coast in the Southeast, and extending across through Texas, and on into the Southwest. Peanuts require a light sandy loam and a warm sunshiny climate.

ROWELL:

Growing conditions must have been unusually favorable in some of that territory last summer. We've got the largest harvest we ever had -- over a billion, three hundred million pounds.

BEATTIE:

Yes, the yield per acre in the Southeast was above average.

VAN DEMAN:

Mr. Beattie, didn't you say the most of that crop would go to the mills to make peanut butter and oil?

BEATTIE:

I'm not sure about the most. But certainly more of it will go into butter than into any other peanut product. Of course the salted nuts and the candies are a big item now.

VAN DEMAN:

To me, the best peanut butter is a blend of the little round Spanish and the larger Virginia peanuts.

BEATTIE:

Yes, as a rule it's about a 50-50 blend, or in some cases a 60-40. The little Spanish fellows make a very smooth, oily butter -- a little too oily perhaps. They need to be mixed with the firmer Virginia nuts -- Jumbos, the less oily Virginia Runners, or others of that type-

ROWELL:

I understand the Department's done quite a lot to improve varieties of peanuts, in cooperation with some of the State Experiment Stations.

BEATTIE:

Yes, I think it was fully 30 years ago we started on the breeding and selection work. For one thing, we were after jumbo types with a high percentage of large, even-sized kernels. They're the best for salted peanuts and candy bars. And of course a great deal's been learned about selecting and storing seed.

VAN DEMAN:

Mr. Rowell, your bureau's done quite a bit on grading?

ROWELL:

Yes, they've set up four grades covering the different types -- White Spanish, Virginia, etc. These grades are a great help to farmers, in marketing their peanut crop, particularly if they're getting loans under the United States Warehouse Act.

BEATTIE:

Miss Van Deman, I think it's about time we let you get in a word about the food value of peanuts.

VAN DEMAN:

I've just been waiting for somebody to say the peanut isn't a true nut.

BEATTIE:

That's a good point. No, the peanut isn't a true nut. It's a low branching legume, with a queer habit of blossoming above ground and growing its seeds underground. From each of the flower stems, the plant



sends down feelers, or "pegs" into the ground. The ends of these pegs enlarge into the seed pods, which are the peanuts in the shell as we buy them.

VAN DEMAN:

Is it that funny habit that gets the peanut the nickname of "goober"?

BEATTIE:

It may be. It has lots of names -- "goober pea", "pinder", "ground nut", "ground pea".

VAN DEMAN:

Like all the peas and beans in the legume family, it's rich in protein. And like all the true nuts -- walnuts, pecans, hickory nuts -- it's rich in fat. And it has phosphorus, and iron, and at least one vitamin.

BEATTIE:

And the protein is high quality, isn't it?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, particularly when it's combined with the protein of wheat-

ROWELL:

Ah, now we're getting somewhere. Please pass the peanut sandwiches.

VAN DEMAN:

Sorry, I slipped up on them. But here's our nut leaflet with recipes for nut sandwiches, cookies, cakes, candies, -- nut brittle for instance -- all sorts of good things you can make with peanuts.

ROWELL:

You mean you can make -- well, we'll let you off this time.

VAN DEMAN:

You better had after that turkey.

BEATTIE:

Say, is there a recipe for peanut stuffing in your leaflet?

VAN DEMAN:

Two recipes for nut stuffings, yes. You can use peanuts or any kind of nuts you want.

We spoke of peanut oil a few minutes ago. It's excellent for deep fat frying. The people down in our laboratory used it along with several other fats and oils for frying potato chips. The ones fried in peanut oil got the highest score. They were a beautiful pale gold color, and fine flavored. And the peanut oil stood the heat very well.

BEATTIE:

Peanut oil has such a high smoking point it's used a lot in the preparation of salted nuts.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, it's perfect for frying the raw nuts to a good brown crisp.

BEATTIE:

Do you tell just how to fix salted nuts in your leaflet?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, sir. We do. We start with a quart of oil in a deep fat frying kettle, and heat the oil to 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Or until a cube of bread browns in 5 or 6 minutes. That much oil will cook about half a pound of nuts at a time. If you're using raw peanuts blanch them first in water to take off the red skins, and let them dry overnight or longer. Then put the nuts in a frying basket or a wire sieve deep enough so they won't float over the top. And lower them into the hot oil. In 6 or 7 minutes, when they begin to turn a clear light brown, take them out at once. Spread them on absorbent paper to drain. And while they're still hot sprinkle with salt. Or if you want to give them shine and luster, roll them around in a little cold oil before you add the salt.

ROWELL:

And oh boy, do they taste like more.

KADDERLY:

Well, you people, have certainly followed the peanut -- under the ground and above the ground. Out of the frying pan, almost into Mike Rowell's mouth-

VAN DEMAN:

Oh we haven't told half we know about the peanut yet.

KADDERLY:

Is that a threat or a hint?

VAN DEMAN:

It's a hint; we'd like to come again-

KADDERLY:

Fine, we'll fix that up--And, Mr. Beattie, I hope you'll come too and tell us more about growing peanuts. A plant with an underground railway system like that is worth hearing more about.

BEATTIE:

Surely, I'll be glad to come any time.

KADDERLY:

Ruth, aren't you going to leave me that nut leaflet, so I can read the title and the number to our listeners?

VAN DEMAN:

Never mind the number. We have only one nut leaflet.

KADDERLY:

All right. The title of that one nut leaflet is: "Nuts and ways to

use them." And I know the Bureau of Home Economics will be glad to honor requests from all listeners for copies of "Nuts and ways to use them". The leaflet is free. Just send a card to the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, here in Washington, D. C., and say you want the leaflet on "Nuts and ways to use them".

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